

Sequoyah HS School Council Meeting

Date: 2/13/2025

Time (called to order): 7:30am

Location: SHS Student Center

Meeting called by: Bob Van Alstyne, Principal (BVA)

Attendees: Stephanie Judkins (SJ), Brandon Grummer (BG), Paige Sims (PS), Chanda Schwab (CS), Tim Chapman (TC), Daniel Morales (DM)

Other attendees/observers: Jason Meade (JM), Assistant Principal; Meagan Waid (MW), Assistant Principal

Absent committee members: None

Approval of Agenda: 6-0 (unanimous)

Approval of Minutes: 6-0 (unanimous)

Presentation(s):

- Course/Elective Selections (MW presents)
 - Information shared via Chiefs Wise newsletter and hard copies sent with students
 - New Student Information System (Synergy) – on students' end, no different
 - All students (9-11) have met with counselors in ELA or Social Studies classes; counselors are now working on makeup conferences with students
 - Meeting held with 8th graders January 27 to explain course and elective options
 - BVA/JM: CTAE department has 5 teachers on extended day (teach 6 classes daily instead of 5) because programs are growing exponentially
 - As CTAE programs grow, SHS is looking to expand offerings and add new pathways
 - SHS grows by about 20-40 students each year
- Security, facility, traffic updates (JM presents)
 - CCSO (Sherriff's Office) understaffed with crossing guards
 - SHS has four exits but only 2 crossing guards; three of four exits have become right turn only
 - Not using exit behind Dean Rusk in order to prevent backups with DRMS buses as well as traffic on East Cherokee Drive
 - This new pattern allows for more traffic movement
 - SHS needs a traffic light at main entrance; traffic study must be conducted by Cherokee County Office of Transportation Engineering – traffic study must also be requested by community (SHS has already requested)
 - Mr. Brett Buchanan, Transportation Director for Cherokee County
bbuchanan@cherokeecountyga.gov
 - General traffic issue: cars use SHS campus as a cut-through to avoid the traffic light at Hickory Road & East Cherokee; BVA has requested gates to prevent unauthorized vehicles on campus
 - Gate leading from courtyard behind cafeteria to Sequoyah East is now locked; has made supervision of students much easier; flow of students in hallways has not been significantly impacted
 - New additions due to begin construction in June 2025: additional gym space at practice field; new locker room space in gym; increased security (gates and fencing – not ideal, but somewhat more secure) is anticipated
 - Discussions being held about building a 3-4 story building at SHS Main (similar to what is being built at Woodstock HS); would not be possibility until next SPLOST vote (2027); this kind of improvement will benefit current elementary students

Report from the Principal: (BVA presents)

- HB 581
 - School board voting on 2/13: expected to opt out of HB 581
 - One-time opportunity to permanently opt-out

- CCSD (and most metro/larger districts) pays teachers above state salary scale – funding comes from local funds (local funds would be impacted by HB 581)
- Smaller districts are not as impacted by HB 581 because they do not pay above the state salary schedule and therefore do not need that extra funding for salaries
- Without opting out, CCSD would lose a projected \$58 million over the next 3 years (would need to be cut from the budget)
- HB 581 is not related to the Senior Tax Credit that passed (so opting out of HB 581 would not affect Senior Tax Credit)
- As home values increase, CCSD will have increased operating costs, so losing significant amounts of funding would severely (and negatively) impact schools
- Misconception that school districts are involved in property taxes – they are not
- Millage rate: 5% is used for larger school districts due to state formula (so CCSD actually sends funds to larger districts like Gwinnett)
- CCSD has been extremely fiscally responsible, which helps taxpayers as well; opting put of HB 581 would allow the district to continue its positive fiscal responsibility
- Most major metro school districts have already opted out of HB 581
- SHS district representative for School Board will be appointed at 2/13 meeting

Old Business: None

New Business: Introduction of new council member, Daniel Morales

Next meeting date: March 13, 2025

Adjournment: 8:37am